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ZNR UUUUU ZZH
O 281444Z DEC 08 ZDK CTG NUMEROUS SVCS
FM AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2610
INFO RUCNFUR/DARFUR COLLECTIVE
RUEHEE/ARAB LEAGUE COLLECTIVE
RHMFISS/CJTJF HOA

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 KHARTOUM 001842

DEPT FOR AF A/S FRAZER, SE WILLIAMSON, AF/SPG, AF/E, AF/PDPA
NSC FOR PITTMAN AND HUDSON
ADDIS ABABA FOR USAU
DEPT PLS PASS USAID FOR AFR/SUDAN

SENSITIVE
SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [ASEC](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [KPKO](#) [SOCI](#) [AU](#) [UNSC](#) [SU](#)

SUBJECT: MINOR DEMONSTRATIONS AT EMBASSY KHARTOUM RELATED TO ISRAELI
AIR STRIKES IN GAZA

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11. (SBU) Summary: On December 27-28, several waves of demonstrators gathered outside the Embassy Khartoum Chancery to exhibit solidarity with the cause of Palestinians following Israeli air strikes in Gaza. The demonstrations remained peaceful but were marked by anti-American slogans including "Down, Down, USA!" and the waving of shoes in the air, in apparent reference to the Iraqi journalist who threw his shoes at President Bush. Throughout the demonstrations, additional Sudanese police responded to ensure the safety of the Chancery building and coordinate with the Embassy's local guard force. End Summary.

12. (SBU) On December 27 at around 18:00, approximately 100 protestors gathered outside the north entrance of the Embassy Khartoum Chancery for a show of solidarity with Palestinians in Gaza. The proceedings were peaceful and lasted approximately 20 minutes. The Embassy was closed at the time, and the group did not attempt to deliver a petition or otherwise make contact with Embassy officials. Additional Sudanese police responded to ensure the safety of the Chancery building and to coordinate with the Embassy's local guard force.

13. (SBU) About an hour after the departure of the demonstrators, the RSO received a call from the Sudanese National Police informing him that a larger demonstration was expected to occur at the Chancery during the afternoon of December 28. The police indicated that the demonstration would be peaceful, and demonstrators would be escorted by a large number of police officers. As a precaution, the Embassy moved its vehicle fleet away from the front of the Chancery to the General Services Office (GSO) Compound the morning of December 28 and temporarily relocated motor pool operations to the off-site GSO warehouse.

14. (SBU) Beginning at around noon on December 28, several waves of demonstrators passed by the Embassy's north entrance. The first group consisted of approximately 150 women from the Islamic Students Union and passed peacefully. A second group of approximately 200 men passed shortly thereafter, chanting slogans of "Down, Down, USA!" and "Down, Down, Israel!" while waving their shoes in the air, in apparent reference to the Iraqi journalist who threw his shoes at President Bush on December 14. Throughout this time, the Chancery remained well-protected by a large truck-full of riot police, 15 diplomatic police and 10 Khartoum State police.

15. (SBU) A third demonstration by students from the Faculty of Radiology at Sudan University of Science and Technology also came to the Chancery with students shouting anti-American slogans such as "The CIA can't rule us." They had an Arabic language petition that the RSO accepted on behalf of the Mission. The translated text was as follows: "We, students of Sudan University, bear you absolute

responsibility for the ongoing carnage in Gaza since you and the Jews are from the same origin. Rights will be restored while injustice and its state will be diminished forever. The battle that our predecessors have started in Iraq and Gaza will continue. You will see black days... and God is Great / Pride for God and his Prophet and Islam / Freedom for Palestine." Later, another group of approximately 30 Sudan University students demonstrated in front of the Southern entrance of the Embassy, remaining for about 10 minutes before departing peacefully. They chanted in Arabic and then "Down, Down, USA" in English.

¶6. (SBU) The demonstrations appear to be related to a larger gathering that includes representatives from civil society, trade unions and other organizations. The United Nations Department of Safety and Security (UNDSS), citing media and other sources, indicated that the "National Communities Society" may have had a hand in organizing one demonstration on December 28, reportedly at the departure terminal of Khartoum Airport. From there the group was expected to march on Khartoum's major thoroughfare -- Africa Road -- to the Afra Shopping Mall (on the other side of town from the Embassy). The HAC commissioner and other prominent speakers were expected to address the rally. All of the groups who demonstrated at the US Embassy also reportedly went to the Egyptian Embassy nearby. They were reportedly stopped en-route to the State Assembly by police and then put in buses and taken to the Africa Road location. It appears that UN and UK offices were not targeted in any demonstrations today.

¶7. (SBU) The protests coincide with official statements from the GOS as well as various political parties and civil society organizations condemning Israeli air attacks in Gaza, according to press reports. The Sudanese Government issued a statement on December 27 condemning the air attacks and urging Israel immediately to stop its "aggression," and on December 28 several Sudanese dailies carried quotes from President Bashir calling for a united Arab position

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against Israel. Bashir also characterized the "genocide" against Palestinians as part of a plot against the Arab world, stating that "what is going on represents a plot against the Arab peoples and has been proved through acts of aggression on Palestine, Iraq, Somalia and Sudan."

¶8. (SBU) The Foreign Relations Secretariat of the ruling National Congress Party (NCP) also issued a statement denouncing Israeli "barbarous and brutal military machinery against innocent unarmed civilians." It accused the international community of standing idly by while the attacks took place, stating that "Darfur and the ICC are concrete evidence of international hypocrisy and double standards." It called on the Arab and Islamic world and its leaders to stand "stand decisively and strongly to halt Israeli raids" and to provide them with material and moral support.

¶9. (SBU) Comment: The protests to date have been kept in check by the GOS, which in the past has organized such demonstrations itself. It is quite possible that the GOS (or organizations that the GOS supports) had a hand in organizing some of today's protests in Khartoum, although it is worth noting that even without such support there is an abundance of popular support here for both Palestine and Hamas. To date, the demonstrations have remained peaceful and focused on the cause of Palestinian solidarity (rather than the pending ICC case against President Bashir). Post will continue to monitor the situation and provide updates as necessary.

ASQUINO